

December 12th, 2024
Yuen Ying Ng MMus Recital
Tanna Schulich Hall - Schulich School of Music
McGill University

Classe de/Class of: JinJoo Cho

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These program notes are written by the student performing, and are presented by the student in partial fulfillment of the requirements of their course.

Ces notes de programme sont écrites par l'étudiant-interprète et sont présentées en tant que réalisation partielle des critères de leur cours.

Program

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| Sonate n°3 en ré mineur pour violon seul / Sonata No.3 in D minor for solo violin, Op. 27 Ballade | Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931) |
| Lotus Land, Op. 47, No. 1 arr. Fritz Kreisler | Cyril Scott (1879-1970) |
| Z domoviny / From My Homeland, Op. 128 Moderato Andantino | Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) |

Intermission

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| Sonate en mi bémol majeur pour violon et piano / Sonata in E-flat Major for Violin and Piano, Op. 18 I. Allegro, ma non troppo II. Improvisation: Andante cantabile III. Finale: Andante - Allegro | Richard Strauss (1864-1949) |
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This program presents a rich range of styles, from Ysaÿe's virtuosity to Scott's impressionism, Smetana's nationalism, and Strauss's Romantic lyricism. The program encompasses both technical brilliance and emotional depth: Ysaÿe's virtuosic *Ballade* offers a dazzling display of violin techniques, blending modernist effect with Romantic expressiveness. Scott's *Lotus Land* enchants with its exotic and impressionistic atmosphere, appealing to those who enjoy dreamy soundscapes. Smetana's *From My Homeland* brings a heartfelt connection to national identity, combining lyrical beauty with lively folk tunes. Finally, Strauss's violin sonata showcases a balance of romantic expressiveness and heroic vibrancy. The curation of the program seeks to engage with a wide variety of emotional resonance through different musical worlds.

Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931)

Sonata No.3 in D minor for Solo Violin, Op. 27, "Ballade"

Belgian violinist and composer, Eugène Ysaÿe, is known for his *Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, Op.27*, which are often compared to J.S. Bach's *Sonata and Partitas* and Paganini's *24 Caprices*. Each sonata reflects the style of the violinists to whom it is dedicated.

Sonata No. 3, "Ballade", written in 1923, is dedicated to George Enescu. This single-movement sonata is divided into two contrasting sections. It begins with *In modo di recitativo*, and this free-form introduction, without bar lines, resembles a monologue. As the intensity builds, the music transitions into *Molto moderato quasi lento* with a 5/4 time signature. The sonata then shifts to *Tempo giusto e con bravura*, featuring a bold three-note motif in 3/8. Following a progressing section of triplets, the music softens into a calm, dolce passage. A slurred *grazioso* section brings back the three-note theme before the piece concludes with a vigorous coda, gradually moving from *più vivo* to *vivo* at the end.

Cyril Scott (1879-1970)

Lotus Land, opus 47, No. 1

Cyril Scott, often called the "English Debussy," was an innovative composer known for his impressionistic style, featuring exotic harmonies and rich textures. He composed over 400 works, including symphonies, operas, and concertos, but he is best remembered for his short piano pieces.

Lotus Land, composed in 1905, became one of Scott's most famous works. Inspired by one of his own poems, it was originally written for piano and later transcribed for violin and piano by Fritz Kreisler. At the time, which was the start of the 20th century, short, characterful pieces like this were popular for home performance.

The piece evokes a sense of exoticism and mystery — its pentatonic melodies and parallel harmonies create a dreamlike atmosphere with unconventional chords and fluid modulations enhance the sense of sensitivity. The melody floats above the gentle, bell-like

accompaniment, producing a meditative and immersive atmosphere. As a whole, the piece exemplifies late 19th century orientalism and impressionism, often compared to Debussy and Ravel.

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884)
From My Homeland, Op. 128

Bedřich Smetana, known as the “Father of Czech music,” composed *From My Homeland* in 1879-80. This two-piece work for violin and piano reflects Smetana’s deep connection to his native Bohemia. It was written during his final years, when he suffered from deafness and declining health. The work is dedicated to Prince Alexander Thurn-Taxis, a close friend of Smetana.

The first movement opens with a warm, lyrical theme — the violin and piano engage in a dialogue, alternating between calm and mystical characteristics. The *più moderato* section introduces a slow dance form, passed between the two instruments with elaborate variation, building up to a virtuosic *risoluto* before ending serenely.

The second movement features a variety of modes and characters. It begins with a rhapsodic piano introduction, leading to a robust violin cadenza. The music then moves into a playful Slavic folk dance, infused with gypsy and polka elements. A mellow, reflective passage follows, marked *meno allegro*. The movement ends with ascending triplets, creating an energetic and excited coda. The piece, though intimate in scale, expresses Smetana’s profound love for his homeland, alongside his six symphonic poems *Má vlast* (My Fatherland) in 1879 and his autobiographical string quartet *Z mého života* (From My Life) in 1876.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)
Sonata in E-flat Major for Violin and Piano, Op. 18

Richard Strauss’s *Violin Sonata in E-flat Major*, composed in 1887-88, is an early example of his lyrical and dramatic style. Written shortly before *Don Juan*, it reflects the influence of his growing mastery of orchestral writing. During this time, Strauss met Pauline de Ahna, who would later become his wife. Their relationship likely inspired the sonata’s passionate nature.

The *Allegro* movement features sweeping melodies and interplay between violin and piano. The second movement, *Improvisation*, is a tender love song that is marked by emotional depth of intimacy and turbulence. This movement was so popular that it was later published separately. The final movement, *Andante-Allegro*, opens with a reflective piano introduction before launching into an energetic and heroic theme with playful exchanges between the instruments, emitting charm and brilliance. The sonata concludes with a powerful coda, showcasing Strauss’s youthful exuberance and boundless energy.